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Context to the nugget

Suresh talks about how Marketing has a function has evolved given the Digital age we are living in. He says that instead of Digital Marketing, he believes in marketing to the Digitally Enabled that is often the entire consumer base. He also speaks about how he leveraged Digital to resurrect the brand Maggi when Nestle re-introduced the brand.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And Marketing as a function in a lot of ways its undergoing disruption with digital, data and stuff. What's your take on let's say Marketing, I don't know it it's 2.0 or 3.0 but what's your insight on how the function is changing?

Suresh Narayanan (SN): Deepak, it has changed dramatically, I can tell you from the time when I was a brand manager to today the change is absolutely 180 degrees we were talking more about defined target groups, psycho graphics, brands with limited reach, media vectors that were relatively well defined and we were happy doing what we were doing, I think today the whole digital age, I don't believe in this term digital marketing, we are now marketing to the digitally enabled for everybody, my assistant brand manager to my sales officer to my marketing manager to my head of business has to be digitally wired, the reason why Maggi was able to comeback, was largely digital, I mean the digital interventions that we have done as a company what we didn't do on the brand for the previous 20 years, we did all that in the first 6 to 9 months of the reintroduction of the brand.

DJ: When you say Digital such as?

SN: Digital advertising, Digital engagements, e-commerce related engagements consumer engagement services, we have a 24x7 consumer engagement services as a company now, our response times are less than 30 minutes for a consumer query, now all this, we have got our own packaging design studio, in-house, we have got out own digital content studio. We make our own digital content, because we don't give it out to agencies to do it, because the time we believe is lost and also from a cost economics point of view, you have your own team, they know exactly what is to be done? So we are really very much on this journey of embracing digitally the consumer because our consumer is, very much the urban middle class, the millennials, their first jobbers was who were in our brands, these people are not interested in your buntings and posters and slightly more archaic modes of communication but more interested in having a conversation with you, on their terms and not on your terms so I think that whole change is propelling the change within the organization and there I see my role as being more a facilitator, since I don't understand I must confess over the 90% of the technology that is being used, I say ok fine, I will give you the license to experiment, Snapdeal was an experiment, it was given and suggested to me by a young brand manager, saying sir my

generation doesn't go to shops, if you please. I said where do you guys go to? They said we buy online, so why don't we launch Maggi online? I said what is the risk of failure? He said sir if it fails, this is a few couple of hundred tons, I said fine doesn't matter, I will take that rap, let's do it, but the rest is history 60000 boxes got sold in less than five minutes the kind of media coverage and the kind of splash it made was worth six month of media.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I really love the point Suresh makes about Digital Marketing not being a sub-function within Marketing. I guess framing it as marketing to the digitally enabled is a better way of looking at it.

The other interesting insight from a leadership stand point was what Suresh says about his role as a facilitator. Given the pace of change, I guess it is getting harder and harder for the CEO of today to stay on top of each and every topic. Collaborative problem solving and creating a space for the team to take smart risks is the new paradigm for leaders and I can imagine that can take some getting used to for leaders who are used to operating in the old industrial paradigm. This can also be a tricky transition when one moves from a functional leadership role where you are the master of the domain to a CEO role where so much needs to happen through facilitation and collaboration. It is worth seeing if the individual needs coaching support to start exhibiting new behaviours that the person may not have had the opportunity to cultivate through the journey.

Thank you for listening. If you are new to the podcast and want to get a sense of the nature of content that is covered, you might want to go to YouTube and type "PlaytoPotential Highlights from 2017". I have tried to capture the key takeaways from my various conversations last year with leaders across disciplines. From people such as Zia Mody, Nandan Nilekani, Viswanathan Anand, Vijay Amritraj, Amish Tripathi, Vinita Bali and the like.

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End of nugget transcription

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Suresh Narayanan - Nuggets

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- 24.02 Suresh Narayanan - Career - getting off to a good start
- 24.03 Suresh Narayanan - Transitioning effectively to a new context
- 24.04 Suresh Narayanan - Maggi crisis and decoding resilience
- 24.05 Suresh Narayanan - Building good business judgment
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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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Podcast Transcript [24.08 Suresh Narayanan - Marketing 2.0](#)

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